

Repentance and Forgiveness

Fred R. Coulter—November 24, 2012

Greetings, everybody! Welcome to Sabbath services! If you want a title for this sermon, it will be *Repentance and Forgiveness*, which we all need all the time.

The other night I was channel surfing because most of the time when you're watching television there's not too much worthwhile to watch. It just struck me how everything is just exactly like it says there in Psa. 39, 'Man at his best state is altogether vanity,' and that the human mind is 'deceitful and desperately wicked above all things.'

So, we're going to talk about the miracle of repentance and forgiveness that God is going to take something over here that is inherently evil: our human nature and our natural instincts that we do, our noble way of thinking, even the things that people think are good.

I thought of that when I was watching on television the Macy's Christmas Parade. 'Oh, this is good, this is wonderful.' Then when they showed the pictures of the door-busters, they opened up the gate and it was like cattle stomping out of a fire, going in to buy things. I thought isn't that just what it says in Rev. 18. You've heard of Black Friday? I think most people now know what Black Friday is. When I first heard the term Black Friday, I thought they were talking about some kind of witchcraft. Black Friday is that businesses are able to make enough money to have a profit for the year if they have a good Christmas season.

I thought of this right here, Revelation 18, Babylon the Great. You look around the world and you see all the upset and all the upheaval and revolutions, killing, bombings, lootings, shootings, attacking, drownings, kidnappings, all of these wonderful lovely things that people do. I'm being very factious indeed.

Revelation 18:1: "And after these things I saw an angel descending from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried out mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hated bird; because all nations... [When Revelation talks about *all* nations, the whole earth, it means *worldwide*.] ...have drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication...'" (vs 1-3).

That's the religious system. Just look at the religious systems of the world—is that not true? They make many professions, but they don't follow God. "...and the kings of the earth have committed

fornication with her..." (v 3). I was looking at a special on the Vatican. The Vatican is the smallest/largest nation in the world—108 acres. They have ambassadors from every country in the world. Why is that? *Because it's also the most political organization in the world, too!*

Now notice, because of the holidays—let's list them:

- Halloween
- Christmas
- New Years
- Lent
- Easter
- Valentine's Day

and whatever ones come in between—"...and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her luxury" (v 3).

When we got back from the Feast last year I walked into the local supermarket and guess what's there, no, even before we left? They had all the Halloween stuff there. Then the first week in November all the Christmas stuff was there. "...have become rich through the power of her luxury."

Yet, they claim that they have the *true religion*. They claim the Bible and don't. Yet out of this God does a miracle *so that He can confound the world and He can show that He is greater than any of the things that Satan the devil can do*. And that He can do it in a way that much of the world will never know.

Romans 3:9—Paul is introducing here how sins are forgiven by showing the nature and activities of human beings: "What then? Are we of ourselves better?... [He was referring to the Jews. To this day they still think they're better] ...Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—with being under sin, Exactly as it is written: 'For there is not a righteous one—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God'" (vs 9-11). That is just out in the world in general.

If a person is seeking God sincerely, he or she will find Him. If they're wanting to know about God, God will lead them. But once God starts doing that, then they have to respond to God.

Verse 12: "They have all gone out of the way; together they have *all* become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness... [They may be practicing kindness, whatever they're going to do, but not many.] ...No, there is not so much as one! Their throats *are* like an open grave... [sounds

like the politicians] ...with their tongues they have used deceit; *the* venom of asps *is* under their lips, (vs whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; destruction and misery *are* in their ways; and *the* way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.’ Now then, we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law...” (vs 12-19).

That’s every human being in the world regardless of how much they sin or regardless of how much they are obedient to some of the commandments of God.

“...so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him; for through *the* law *is* the knowledge of sin” (vs 19-20). But how does God have it to come out of this dilemma? As we go through the Bible, we’ll see that there are times of forgiveness of sin that are not related to salvation. Forgiveness of sin related to salvation also requires baptism so that you become under grace. He’s explaining that right here. He’s explaining something that was not revealed until Jesus had come, which is this:

Verse 21: “But now, *the* righteousness of God *that is* separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.... [the Law and the Prophets spoke of Jesus] ...Even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference” (vs 21-22).

Everything under the Old Covenant was for the twelve tribes of Israel. After Christ came He said, ‘Go into all the world.’ Now we’re dealing with all people. That’s part of the history that we have in the book of Acts, how God begins to deal with those of different nations and how that Paul writes that if you are Christ’s then you are Abraham’s seed according to the promise. This is something really fantastic that God is doing, but it is also something that is very powerful and works on an individual basis with different people as they yield to God.

Verse 23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Let’s stop right here and turn back to Romans 2 and let’s see something about God how that God is the One Who is doing all of these things through His Spirit. Romans 2:3: “Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the

graciousness of God leads you to repentance?” (vs 3-4). God is the One Who leads you to repentance. He works in people’s lives and finally they come to a point—and many people come to this point in their lives, but how many really turn to God where they’ve seen that everything they’ve done in their lives has not worked out. Everything has just been upside down, backward, they are miserable; they are in terrible shape: mentally, emotionally and spiritually; maybe even physically, too.

But God reaches down and He leads to repentance and He does that with His Spirit. So we want to talk about all those things that God does with His Spirit in leading us to Him. In order for the next part of Rom. 3, you must repent before Rom. 3:24 applies. You repent of sin. Sin is the transgression of the law. Sin is *lawlessness*—‘*anomia*’—***operating contrary to the laws of God!***

Romans 3:24: “*But* are being justified freely by His grace... [that is through repentance] ...through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus.” Let’s see a prophecy of this.

- Who is God looking to?
- Who is God going to grant this to?
- Who is God going to begin dealing with?
- What is it that He looks to?

God tells us in Isa. 55 to ‘seek the Lord while He may be found,’ and that we need to make our thoughts in line with His thoughts. In Isa. 66 He takes something that is really a tremendous thing, the most important thing that a man could do on earth, that is build a temple for God and He compares that to someone who is repentant.

Isaiah 66:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,’ says the LORD” (vs 1-2)—because He created them. So, if you make something for God you’re going to make it out of what He has already created. This is why conversion is such a fantastic thing, because you are involved in developing the mind and character of Christ.

“... ‘But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word”” (v 2). Means *you see the Word of God applies to you and you begin to live by it.* That’s what God wants us to do.

Let’s see some of the other attributes and promises that God gives that He wants us to do while we’re repenting, while we’re coming to understand, while we’re realizing that our lives need to be changed, our minds need to be changed, everything about us needs to be changed. Of course,

that's why there's baptism with burial in water. Let's see how all of these are connected with the attitude that God wants us to have for repentance. Then we will look at some other Scriptures concerning repentance and then we will see what does God want.

Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.... [Not filled with vanity and lifted up; not high and mighty.] ...Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (vs 3-6). All of these things are the attitudes that we need to have and develop on a continuous basis. We don't just do it once and it's all over. *No!*

Always remember this. When you get angry and you want to execute vengeance, v 7: "Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy." You could take each one of these and do the opposite. If you are unmerciful, you won't get any mercy.

Verse 8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart... [Look at every one of these are spiritual characteristics that God wants us to have and only can come from God.] ...for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God" (vs 8-9).

Once you really find out about the Truth of God, certain things may even happen in your life that are really the opposite of what you want, but are necessary, so God tests us whether we will be faithful or not. It is the next one, v 10: "Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Look at the opposite, these next two verses show the difference in a converted mind and converted character that God wants us to have, v 11: "Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake."

Normally what people do, they go out and kill. As I was channel surfing I spent some time watching the Hatfield's and McCoy's history, back there in West Virginia and Northern Kentucky. What a bloody mess that was! What a terrible, terrible thing that was! Every time something happened you went out and killed, you went out and looted, you went out and burned. Finally they exhausted themselves, just plain exhausted themselves after about three generations. They saw the cemetery out here with all of the Hatfields in one cemetery and all the McCoy's across the river in the other cemetery. Finally they said, 'This is getting us nowhere.' How much they turned to God, we don't know. But it's awfully hard to say for someone doing you wrong that you won't retaliate.

Verse 12: "Rejoice and be filled with joy... [That's the opposite of when someone comes after you—right? *Yes!*] ...for great *is* your reward in heaven; for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you."

Let's see what God is going to do upon repentance and then what repentance and forgiveness together work in our lives, Romans 3:24: "But are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested to be a propitiation through faith in His blood..." (vs 24-25). For sins to be forgiven for salvation takes the blood of Jesus Christ and nothing else will do.

We see that even after that we are to go and sin no more. Then as we are converted, we begin to realize that there is the *sin within*. I've done at least one sermon, I'll do one more on *How to Overcome the Sin Within*. How do you do that? In the first place it's all these things you've done out here. Now you've stopped doing all the things out here, now God wants to work in the mind. That becomes the *real work of God* with your cooperation. We'll see how that is done also.

But it's through the blood of Jesus Christ, His sacrifice alone. There is no law that says do this 10,000 times and you'll be saved. "...in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past" (v 25). You can't say, 'Oh, Lord, I'm going to sin next week. Forgive me it now.' Every sin that a person commits in a moment of time is a past sin. Time goes on, you've done it, it's already right there in the past though it was immediately done.

Let's see what this is going to work for us. Let's see how God does this. Let's see how He intervenes in our lives. We even see a lot of spiritual things in the prophets. In fact, all the prophecies concerning Christ and His suffering, one of the major ones is in Isa. 53 and the other one is in Ps. 22.

It always comes up, now that you have repented of your sins: What are you to do? What does God expect us to do? Isa. 1:15 applies to all people, not only just the religious ones, but all people. In fact as the New Testament points out, with the history of the scribes and Pharisees, they need repentance as well, even though they don't think they do.

God says, Isaiah 1:15: "And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.... [because you've got to stop] ...Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean... [How do you do that? *Through repentance!*] ...put away the evil of your doings from

before My eyes; cease to do evil” (vs 15-16). You stop! We will see that Jesus said to those who had sinned, ‘Go and sin no more.’

Notice what we have to do that, v 17: “Learn to do good... [You have to learn what is right; learn to do good. That comes from God.] ...seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD...” (vs 17-18). Here’s a promise.

Every time I read this I think of the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul was dedicated to Judaism, hostile against the Christians. He was commissioned by the high priest to go out and arrest the Christians, bring them and cast them into prison. He was even there holding the coat of Stephen when he was stoned to death. God reached down and called him.

“...‘Though your sins are as scarlet... [We’re going to look at some sins here in just a little bit.] ...they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. **If**... [here’s what God expects when He forgives sin]: ...you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with* the sword;’ for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*” (vs 18-20). That’s set before all of us.

Let’s look and see what God is going to do. Let’s look at how repentance involves your emotions and how you come to see yourself. Luke 15 is one of the most moving and important chapters in the book of Luke concerning repentance and forgiveness. How does God look at repentance? As I’ve mentioned many times in the past, God always honors repentance because He knows that within it is still there. It’s inside that God is concerned about, changing us, developing the character of God.

The first parable He spoke, Luke 15:4: “Which man of you who has a hundred sheep, and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost, *searching* until he finds it? And when he finds *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing; And after coming to his house, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’.... [There is activity in heaven upon repentance]: ...I tell you that likewise, *there* shall be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, *more* than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance” (vs 4-7). Then He says the same way concerning the woman who lost a coin

Verse 11: “Then He said, ‘A certain man had two sons; And the younger of them said to *his* father, ‘Father, give me that portion of the property which falls to me.’ And he divided to them *his* living. And

not many days after, the younger son gathered everything together *and* departed into a distant country. And there he wasted *all* his substance, living *in* debauchery. But after he had spent everything...” (vs 11-14). God works in circumstances. Here we have circumstances in general in the country.

Now we have circumstances in particular with the young man. “...there arose a severe famine throughout that country, and he began to be in need. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine” (vs 14-15). You can’t have anything lower to do for a Jew than to feed swine.

Verse 16: “And he was longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine were eating, but no one gave *anything* to him”—because he was probably told by the landowner, ‘This is expensive and you cannot eat what you’re feeding to the swine.’ There was probably some punishment with it if he did.

Verse 17 is the very key that we all need to come to in repentance: “And **when he came to himself**...” That is a statement that says when you’re finally looking at yourself the way you are and looking at your circumstances the way that they are. You come to the realization of how you’ve lived your life and this is the first step of repentance leading to forgiveness.

Verse 17: “And when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger?’” It also shows he was willing to humble himself. He didn’t come waltzing back to his father and say, ‘Well, Dad, I was out there and I was in this country and unfortunately I wasted everything I have and it was just a mistake. They did it and that one did it and the other one did it.’ *No, he didn’t do that!* He humbled himself. He said to himself, ‘Look, I’m in worse shape than the servants that my father hires.’

Verse 18: “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him... [compare that attitude with the one where he said, ‘Father, give me the portion of the property which falls to me.’] ...‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants’” (vs 18-19).

This is a parable of *how God will receive us back*. That’s why Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that ‘the tax collectors and harlots are going into the Kingdom of God before you.’ God letting us alone, living in our sins, **when we come ourselves** and that’s the thought in your mind. Everyone has to experience this:

- What am I doing?

- Where am I going?
- Do I love this misery I am in?

He came to his father, v 20: “And he arose *and* went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran *and* embraced him, and ardently kissed him.... [Isn’t that something?] ...And his son said to him... [Because he had everything prepared. Think of what it took for him to come back home. Think what it took to come to this frame of mind where he says:] ...‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son’” (vs 20-21). That’s a real repentance!

But notice, just like God has something greater for us that we just read of in Matt. 5, now God can begin to work with you. Here is a preview of what salvation’s going to be all about, right here, the next few verses.

Verse 22: “But the father said to his servant, ‘Bring out a robe, the best robe, and clothe him, and give *him* a ring for his hand and sandals for *his* feet; and bring the fattened calf and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, but is alive again; and he was lost, but is found.’ And they began to be merry” (vs 22-24). We won’t go into the attitude of the son who stayed back, but there again was a wrong attitude on his part.

Let’s see the working of repentance. God is ready to forgive, just like with the father when the son came back. We’re going to see a good number of Psalms; we’re going to look at them and see how this helps us tell about repentance and forgiveness. Lots of times when we sin, and we know we’ve sinned, we say, ‘I’ll go pray once I get myself straightened out.’ You have to get yourself straightened out by repenting. How are you going to get yourself straightened out if you don’t pray? ***Because you need forgiveness!***

Psalm 86:1: “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy.... [just like the prodigal son; he was he was poor and needy] ...Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You” (vs 1-2). Because you’re coming to God, trusting in His forgiveness. What did the prodigal son do? He came home to the father—right? *Yes!*

Verse 3: “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” (vs 3-4). Notice, God is willing, God is ready, God is there to forgive, but ***we have to come to God in the right way and right attitude*** and forgiveness is there. We’ll talk about what kind of sins are the sins that we can repent of and it’s all but one sin.

Verse 5: “For You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You.” We need mercy, forgiveness, kindness, and likewise, we have to treat each other same way—correct? *Yes!*

Notice how he prayed, v 6: “Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, and You will answer me” (vs 6-7).

- God will answer
- God will hear
- God will forgive

Psalm 51 is preserved for us that records David’s attitude after Nathan the prophet came to him and told him concerning Bathsheba and her husband Uriah the Hittite, ‘You are the man.’ This is between David and God and to have this here shows us something very important. This was a great sin and it was a sin of deceit. It was a sin of exaltation of his authority as king. It was a sin of passion and lust—and Bathsheba’s as well—both of them involved.

He tried everything he could to make it right. Remember he sent Uriah back to have what they call in the army ‘r ’n r’ (rest and recuperation) to be with his wife in hopes that he would lay with her. That was a pretty good scheme. But Uriah, even though he ate with the king, probably sitting there, ‘Wonder what the king wants.’ He ate and drank. David tired to get him drunk so he would stagger home and be with his wife. But he went and laid on the doorstep.

He tried two nights to get him to go lay with his wife and then when the baby was born it would be his. It didn’t work. David didn’t *come to himself* until God sent Nathan and gave him the parable. The rich man, who was David, took the little ewe from the poor man. Nathan said, ‘What are you going to do to him?’ *We’re going to make him pay!* Nathan looked right at him and said, ‘***You are the one.***’ God says, ‘I made you king, I gave you what you wanted. I gave your enemies into your hand. I helped you conquer the land. I brought the twelve tribes of Israel together under you. Moreover, if that wasn’t enough I would have done thus-and-such.’

David repented! *God put away his sin.* Now look at everything that was involved. There was still the residual the rest of his life because he did this with deliberation, but he was going to have trouble in his family and, yes, he did.

(go to the next track)

We want to add some other Scriptures to Psa. 51 so that we can see the process taking place. Come to 1-John 1. Here’s another promise that ties in with Rom. 3 that we covered about how God

accomplishes the removing of our sins through His grace by the blood of Christ. That is the sacrifice.

1-John 1:6: “If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him... [Means we have contact with God. We pray to God. We’re keeping His commandments.] ...but we are walking in the darkness... [The darkness is the light of this world from Satan the devil.] ...we are lying to ourselves... [In other words we haven’t come to grips with the deceitfulness that we do not have the ability to do things of our own, of a righteousness that God requires.] ...and **we are not practicing the Truth.**”

That’s a perfect description of Sunday-keeping and holiday-keeping. Of course, what he’s talking about here are about those who at that time were bringing those things into the Church.

Verse 7: “However, if we walk in the light...” If you do a word study on *light*:

- the commandments of God
- the way of God
- the Truth of God
- Christ is the Light of the world
 - ✓ the Resurrection
 - ✓ the Way, the Truth and the Life

“...as He is in the light... [that’s the standard for us] ...*then* we have fellowship with one another... [it also includes all of us together] ...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from **all** sin” (v 7).

The only sin that will not be forgiven is the sin in rejecting God, rejecting His Holy Spirit. If a person has that kind of sin, they don’t even care. So, if someone is worried, ‘Have I committed the unpardonable sin?’ If you are worried, no you haven’t. The best thing to do is go repent.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.” One of the things we are going to see is the result of repentance and confession of sins and forgiveness of sin is to replace the lies, the deceit, the evil within with Truth.

Here’s a promise, v 9: “If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” God gave us the nature that we have. He is there willing; He is there ready—upon repentance and confession—to forgive our sins. There isn’t any one of us who hasn’t done something that is really of a great magnitude before God that needs repentance; that needs forgiveness. God will do that. Why? *Because we’re out there blinded by Satan the devil*, going our way, living the way that we think is right and God is there to forgive when we come to our senses to understand what we’re doing.

Psalm 51:1 also shows us how to approach God: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions.”

When you stop and think about everything he had to think of and everything David had to do to try and cover this up and yet, like it says, there are birds that fly with messages. They didn’t have telephones in those days, but they had talking tongues. The country knew about this. They knew! You think Joab kept his mouth shut?

Verse 2: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” Notice how this follows along with 1-John 1. ‘Cleanse me from my sin’ and that means you have to have your mind cleared, your thoughts cleared, the mark before God against you in sinning, you have to have that cleansed and wiped away.

Verse 3: “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.” You come to the point that there is nothing else you can think of than to repent of that sin and think to yourself, ‘How could I have done this?’

Here’s the truth concerning all sin. Others are involved. It involved Bathsheba. It involved Uriah the Hittite. It involved Joab the general. It involved the soldiers that were with Uriah the Hittite that they had to obey the command to withdraw and leave him alone so the enemy could kill him. That got out to all Israel—all Israel knew.

Verse 4: “Against You... [even though all those other people were involved] ...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”—because God certainly was in the right. Look that all that He did for David.

He goes clear back to the time that David was conceived, and He says, v 5: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity... [that’s an admittance that sin is within, part of your being] ...and in sin did my mother conceive me..... [the result of repentance]: ...Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts...” (vs 5-6). Inside:

- your mind
- your thoughts
- your spirit
- your attitude

God will forgive and cleanse. We’re to remember the lesson, but we’re not to go back and emotionally relive the thing again. Paul always remembered what he did to the Church. He repented of that, but he didn’t go back and emotionally relive it over and over again.

“...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.... [That you learn from what you did and you understand how foolish that was.] ...Purge me with hyssop... [that’s the strongest cleaner you can get] ...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (vs 6-7). It’s like it says there, ‘He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from *all unrighteousness*.’ God is ready to forgive. Notice how quickly, when you read the account that God forgave David, He said, ‘Your sin is put away.’ “...wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Isn’t that what we read back there in Isa. 1? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 8: “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 8-9). All of this, first nine verses, is the foundation of what God wants with repentance and forgiveness.

Now something new is going to happen, v 10: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.... [That’s what God wants so that out of it we can learn the lessons, we can go forward, we can change.] ...Cast me not away from Your presence... [He came very close to being rejected by God after all that God did for him.] ...and take not Your Holy Spirit from me” (vs 10-11). It shows that even with the Holy Spirit you can sin.

Verse 12: “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let *Your* free spirit uphold me.” That’s what we need, brethren. That’s why you look at the things in the New Testament and when it says, ‘If there’s someone who has a fault or trouble, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness considering yourself.’ Here is God:

- Who is perfect
- Who is righteous
- Who is Holy
- Who is loving
- Who is kind
- Who is gracious

and He’s blotting out your sins and washing them away.

Now let’s see what He does with them. When God does something, wouldn’t you say He does a good job? *Yes, indeed!* Now then, we come to God with thanksgiving, with blessing, with gratefulness, with humility. Psalm 103 tells us what God does with our sins.

Psalm 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.... [Now you become even more dedicated to God, more thankful to God.] ...Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits” (vs 1-2). Think

about everything that God has done for you in many different ways.

Verse 3: “Who forgives all your iniquities... [That’s what it says back in 1-John 1. Forgives all your iniquities, all your sins, all your shortcomings.] ...Who heals all your diseases.... [*God does!*] ...Who redeems your life from destruction... [Because sure enough, with all the sins that we have, we’re headlong for destruction—right? *Yes!* Redeems us—*has bought us back* with the sacrifice of Christ.] ...Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies” (vs 3-4). Just like the father of the prodigal son.

The son came home, he didn’t say, ‘Well about time you got back here. What have you been doing? I knew it, yeah, you go over there and you get the worst job.’ *No, he didn’t do it!* He gave him a robe, accepted him back, ring for his finger, sandals for his feet. He must have been in miserable shape when he came home, all bedraggled, dirty.

Verse 5: “Who satisfies your desires with good things; your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.... [Yes, God is there to help you in every way.] ...The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all who are oppressed.... [Sin from Satan the devil is what oppresses us.] ...He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy” (vs 5-8). Isn’t that something? You go to any of the courts of the land here and see if you can get any of that.

Verse 9: “He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins... [the wages of sin is death and we’re still alive] ...nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (vs 9-12).

- They have been removed!
- They are gone on God’s record!

Verse 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 understands!***

Now let’s see about the prayer of intercession, confession and repentance. Let’s come to the book of Daniel, chapter nine, and let’s see how Daniel prayed. Notice how fervent this prayer was because he finally understood the seventy years that Jeremiah had written in his book. This is really a

heartfelt prayer. Notice, God intervened immediately to give him the prophecy of the coming Messiah, way beyond his expectation.

Daniel 9:2: “In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel understood by books the number of the years, which came according to the Word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. And I set my face toward the LORD God... [full purpose] ...to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (vs 2-3). We don’t need sackcloth and ashes today, because God wants a broken spirit and a contrite heart, but we certainly do need fasting. Fasting comes with repentance, as well.

Verse 4: “And I prayed to the LORD my God and made my confession, and said, ‘O LORD, the great and awesome God, keeping the covenant and mercy to those who love Him, and to those who keep His commandments.’” Here he’s praying for the whole nation of Israel, all exiled; the ten tribes off into Assyria, the Jews over into Babylon. Here’s Jerusalem lying desolate.

Verse 5: “We have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, and have turned aside from Your commandments and from Your ordinances. Neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our rulers, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land” (vs 5-6). This is the kind of prayer that is necessary to heal the nation here today. Of course, we are far, far from that kind of attitude.

Verse 7: “O LORD, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us confusion of face, as at this day to the men of Judah and to the people of Jerusalem, and to all Israel who are near and who are afar off, through all the countries where You have driven them because they dealt treacherously with You.” Notice that deep repentance and confession here. This is quite a prayer.

Verse 8: “O Lord, confusion of face belongs to us, to our kings, to our rulers, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the LORD our God belong mercies and forgivenesses even though we have rebelled against Him” (vs 8-9). You acknowledge your rebellion.

Verse 10: “Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God to walk in His laws... [you confess your transgressions] ...which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and have turned aside, so that they might not obey Your voice... [he realized what happened] ...Therefore the curse has been poured out upon us, and the oath that is written in the Law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him” (vs 10-11). That’s quite a prayer!

Right after that the decree went out to release as many of the Jews as wanted to go back to the Holy Land. Then the prophecy came, the rest of chapter nine, concerning the coming of the Messiah.

Let’s see some other things concerning how we are to forgive. Here’s quite a touching one. We’re to forgive one another. Remember what Jesus said that our sins are forgiven if we forgive those who sin against us. God expects us to operate in that manner. Sometimes it’s really hard to do, especially if you’ve been offended. But God expects that to be done.

Let’s look at one of the greatest offences in the world. Let’s come back to Genesis 50. That was quite a thing. This is after Jacob died, whose name was changed to Israel. Now came the moment of truth. Joseph and his brothers were together now.

- What had they done?
- What a thing that they did!

Joseph came out with a tunic of many colors that his father gave him and was very arrogant, smart-alecky to them. He told them, ‘I had two dreams.’ One of them was that even his father and mother would bow down to him and so would they. So they got mad and they were going to kill him, but no, Judah said ‘Don’t kill him; let’s sell him.’ Nice loving brotherly love, nice kindness that’s going on.

They took his tunic, took the blood of a goat, put all over it, and here came the Midians with their caravan. They sold him off to Egypt. Came back and bald-faced lied for all of those years that Joseph died; eaten alive by a wild beast. That was the son that Jacob loved and he was just like the father of the prodigal son.

Then you know what happened. When there was a famine they had to go down into Egypt. That was after, through God’s blessing and grace, Joseph was raised to be second in command of all of Egypt and how through his work of the seven years of plenty they survived the seven years of famine. God worked it out that they had to come down and get food. You know what happened. They didn’t recognize Joseph because he was all dressed in this Egyptian garb and was full-grown at that time. He knew who they were, but he didn’t tell them.

He did several things, he put silver candlesticks in their grain taking back, then had the Egyptian troops go out and say, ‘You’ve stolen things.’ *No, we didn’t.* ‘Yes, you did.’ Looked in there, ‘What is this?’ They brought them back and he said, all right, ‘Are there any others of you?’ *Yes, we have a young brother.* That was Joseph’s brother, as well. He said, ‘You bring him.’ *We can’t!* ‘You bring him!’

They sent back to Jacob, said, ‘You have to let Benjamin go with us on this next trip.’ To make a long story short, at that time then he revealed who he was and said, ‘Go get my father.’ So, they all came down to Egypt. They were given the best land in the land of Goshen and the children of Israel lived there.

They prospered, became mighty. Joseph lives to be 110-years-old. Before Joseph’s death and after they buried his father, Genesis 50:14 is a perfect example of *forgiveness of a great sin*. I imagine that this was really quite a tremendous thing that they went through. Have you ever had a family feud that ran so hard and so deep that you did things that were so wrong and so deliberate, and yet, forgiveness is required.

Genesis 50:14: “And Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father. 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... [they wrote it out] ...‘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” (vs 16-17).

Verse 18: “And his brothers also went and fell down before his face. And they said, ‘Behold, we *are* your servants.’ ... [that must have been quite a scene, indeed] ...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.... [That must have really been quite a thing at that point.] ...And Joseph lived in Egypt, he and his father’s house. And Joseph lived a hundred and ten years” (vs 18-22). Then it talks a little bit more about Joseph there.

That was quite a thing! Now let’s look at one that is even greater than that. Let’s come to the book of Luke. We won’t go through all the experience that Jesus went through leading up to the crucifixion, but I want you to understand that through this how ready God is to forgive sin. You go to God; you confess your sins. You have problems you’re battling in your mind, we’ll cover that some more even with the sermons I’ve been doing on *How to Overcome the Sin Within*.

Remember, all that Jesus had gone through, the mocking, the beating, the hitting, the spitting, the things that the high priest did, that the soldiers did.

The scourging. If there’s one thing in the movie by Mel Gibson, I think that his depiction of the scourging was really very graphic because it says that He was marred more than the sons of men.

What is God manifested in the flesh going to do? Here there is not one who repented, Luke 23:33: “And when they came to the place called *Place of a Skull*, there they crucified Him and the malefactors, one on *the* right and one on *the* left.... [First thing that Jesus said when they hoisted Him up on that tree to make the cross]: ...Then Jesus said, ‘**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing**’” (vs 33-34). You talk about merciful, kind, and gracious and loving. Yes, indeed, that is sure true! Absolutely!

Let’s come back to Psalm 85. What you need to do in going to God is

- humble yourself
- confess your sins
- ask God to wipe them away

You have to get up and do what is right after that, ***change your behavior!*** Ask God to help

- change your mind
- change your thoughts.

God will do it! That’s why He’s called you.

- He has called you to be His son or daughter.
- He has called you to live forever.
- He has called you that daily you can have your sins forgiven.

Psalm 85:1: “O LORD, You have shown favor to Your land; You have brought back Jacob from exile. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sins. Selah” (vs 1-2)—which means *meditate on this*. Over here in Ps. 86:5, it says ‘You are ready to forgive.’

Verse 3: “You have taken away all Your wrath; You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.... [this helps us to see how we need to pray to God, as well] ...Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease” (vs 3-4)—because God is ready to forgive.

Verse 5: “Will you be angry with us forever? Will You draw out Your anger to all generations? Will You not give us life again, so that Your people may rejoice in You?” (vs 5-6). We think of that with the whole world and all twelve tribes of the children of Israel today.

Verse 7: “Show us Your mercy, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation.... [That’s what we want. We want to be saved from our sins, but we want to be saved from the flesh.] ...I will hear what God the

LORD will speak... [We have it right here, written down for us.] ...for He will speak peace to His people... [that's Israel] ...and to His saints... [That is us, because every epistle of the Apostle Paul is 'Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.'] ...but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, so that glory may dwell in our land" (vs 7-9).

I love these next verses. These are tremendous and this is what God wants out of it all. God does not delight in the death of the wicked.

Verse 10: "Mercy and Truth have met together... [through the mercy and longsuffering of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ] ...righteousness and peace have kissed each other.... [What a beautiful, poetic thing that is written.] ...Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good, and our land shall yield its increase. Righteousness shall go before Him and shall set us in the way of His steps" (vs 10-13).

That's what God will do with forgiveness. This is why every day we ask God, 'Forgive us our sins as we have sinned against others'—*everyday!* This will help us greatly when we understand the forgiveness of God. None of us have done the things as treacherously as David or as evil and hardhearted as the Apostle Paul when he was Saul.

Whatever it is that you repent of, let God wash it away; learn the lesson and be dedicated to doing the Truth. That's what repentance and forgiveness is all about!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 18:1-3
- 2) Romans 3:9-23
- 3) Romans 2:3-4
- 4) Romans 3:24
- 5) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 6) Matthew 5:3-12
- 7) Romans 3:24-25
- 8) Isaiah 1:15-20
- 9) Luke 15:4-7, 11-24
- 10) Psalm 86:1-7
- 11) 1-John 1:6-9
- 12) Psalm 51:1-12
- 13) Psalm 103:1-14
- 14) Daniel 9:2-11
- 15) Genesis 50:14-22
- 16) Luke 23:33-34
- 17) Psalm 85:1-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 39
- Isaiah 55, 53
- Psalm 22

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

How to Overcome the Sin Within

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