



**Old Testament Reading: Psalm 51:1-17**  
**New Testament Reading: 1 John 1:1-10**

## **In Search of the Old Paths**

### **“I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins”**

#### **Psalm 130:1-8**

**Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor**

The forgiveness of our sins is the core of the Christian faith. Unless our sins can be forgiven, we have no hope of our eternal home in heaven, the Christian faith is no better than the other false religions in the world today, and this life is all there is.

- This truth is emphasized by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:18-20, where he said, ***“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”***

Because of the “cheap grace” that is being proclaimed today, rather than being humbled by God’s forgiveness of our sins, many believers simply take it for granted.

- Cheap grace minimizes the seriousness of sin, for sin is not a mistake or a wrong choice: sin is an act of rebellion against a Holy God, and it must be punished by death.
- Cheap grace is to treat God's mercy as a license to continue sinning without any conviction, much less remorse; in effect, it ignores that God's forgiveness of our sin required the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus.

The concept of God's willingness to forgive our sins is woven throughout the Old Testament.

- Exodus 34:6-7: ***"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."***
- In Leviticus and Numbers, Moses laid out a sacrificial system whereby a priest could make atonement for a person's sin through the sacrifice of specific animals.

But it was the Apostle Paul who formerly articulated the sacrificial death of Christ as the sufficient propitiation for man's sin.

- In 1 Corinthians 15:3, ***"Christ Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."***
- In Romans 3:25, Paul said God presented Jesus as the sufficient sacrifice of atonement through the shedding of His blood.
- In Romans 8:3, Paul explained that God sent His own Son ***"to be a sin offering"*** to condemn the sin in humans.
- In Ephesians 5:2, Paul urged his readers to ***"live a life of love, just as Christ loved us, and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice unto God."***
- In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul compared the Lord Jesus with the Passover Lamb when he wrote: ***"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. "***
- The writer of Hebrews referred to Jesus as ***"the ultimate High Priest who has passed through the heavens."***

The fact that, as Christians, we believe our sins can be forgiven by our faith alone in Christ alone is a radical idea.

- The pagans mock Christians for believing in such nonsense. They can't understand how the debt of one man's sins could be paid for by another man, or

how a person forgives another person for something that person has done without that person making amends for it?

- None of the Eastern religions, such as Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism believes in the forgiveness of sin. They believe in “karma” – bad actions lead to negative consequences and good actions lead to good consequences.

As he was studying the Book of Romans, Martin Luther, a Catholic Priest at the time, was convicted when he read Romans 1:17 where the Apostle Paul said, “**The Just shall live by faith!**” Luther said, for the first time in his life, he began to see clearly that God forgives our sin, not because of anything we do, but solely on the basis of what Jesus did for us when he died on the cross and rose from the dead. Luther called that truth the gate to heaven.

## **1. Why Do We Need Forgiveness – Psalm 130:3 – “If You, Lord, should mark our iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”**

- Over a century ago, Franz Kafka, a Jewish/Czech philosopher, said, “**The problem with modern people is that we feel like sinners, yet without guilt. We sense that something is wrong in our lives, but we live in a society that tells us to get rid of the guilt by getting rid of the rules that make us feel guilty.**”
- However, because of the way God created us, the basic rules of acceptable behavior do not change just because they are hidden from our sight or are never taught to us.
- Man is not a sinner because he sins; man sins because he is a sinner by nature and by choice, and contrary to the self-help gurus who say the answer is within us, the only remedy for man’s sin nature is God’s forgiveness.
- God has created us with deep longing to be forgiven. That intrinsic conviction we feel when we commit a sin, and the inherent guilt that follows, is God’s homing device to draw our hearts to Him.
- 1 Peter 3:18, “**Christ suffered once for sins, the just or righteous for the just or unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.**”
- The goal of the gospel, i.e., Jesus’ death and resurrection, was that He might bring us back to God, and all of the other blessings, the removal of His wrath, the escape from hell, etc., are just the side benefits of being redeemed by the blood of Christ.
- Repentance is not the road to shame and humiliation. Repentance is the road back home. Repentance is turning away from our sin and running into the arms of the Father who has been waiting for us to return unto Him.

- Luke 15:7, ***“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”***

## **2. What Hope Do We Have of Forgiveness – Psalm 130:4 – *“But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”***

- One of the puritans said it this way: **“There is no man who, if all his secret thoughts were made known, would not deserve hanging a dozen times a day.”**
- However, God does not delight in punishing us for our sins. God seeks opportunities to forgive us because forgiveness is in His nature. God is eager to forgive. He is ready to forgive. He wants to forgive.
- Isaiah 55:7 – ***“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”***
- The songwriter put it this way: **“Come, every soul by sin oppressed—there’s mercy with the Lord, and He will surely give you rest by trusting in His Word. For Jesus shed His precious blood, rich blessings to bestow; plunge now into the crimson flood that washes white as snow.”**

## **3. What Happens When We Are Forgiven – “Psalm 130:4 – *“That You may be feared.”***

- The word “feared” means to show respect and reverence; i.e., to worship Him, and to give Him the glory due His Holy Name.
- Once we are forgiven of our sins, and that feeling of unease is removed, we are free to worship God in spirit and in truth.
- If the Lord kept a record of our sins, who could hope to stand before Him? Would we not all be doomed and dammed forever?
- But the Psalmist said, ***“With God, there is forgiveness.”***
  - Isaiah 44:22 – God blots out our sins as a thick cloud.
  - Jeremiah 31:34 – God forgets our sins: He remembers them no more.
  - Isaiah 38:17 – God puts our sins behind His back.
  - Micah 7:19 – God buries our sins in the depths of the sea.
  - Psalm 103:12 – God removes our sins as far as the east is from the west.

- 1 John 2:12 – ***“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name’s sake.”***
- God does not forgive us of our sins just to save us from hell, but to prove who and what He is; i.e., to validate His Character, His authority: His redemptive power, His victory over sin, Satan, and death, through the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.