

God's Forgiveness

One of the great blessings of the gospel is the forgiveness of sins. Paul writes in Ephesians 1.7, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." This is a blessing we all need because all of us have sinned against God (see Rom 3.23). Yet, instead of condemning us for our sin God offers us his forgiveness. Notice the following characteristics of God's forgiveness.

God's forgiveness is *free*. He forgives us, not because we deserve it, but because he loves us. His pardon is free and undeserved. If you and I got what we deserve, it would be God's judgment. But God doesn't give us what we deserve; he gives us his mercy and forgiveness instead. Psalm 103.10-11 says, "He does not treat us as our sins deserve, or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him."

God's forgiveness is *full*. He does not offer us a partial forgiveness; he gives us a full, complete forgiveness. He forgives us of all our sins. 1 John 1.9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." There is no sin that God cannot forgive if we confess it to him and repent of it. He can forgive murder, adultery, idolatry, or any other sin. The only sin he can't forgive is the one we won't let go of, the one we won't repent of. But if we confess our sins to him, he will grant us a full pardon. How is this possible? It is possible because Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, died on the cross for our sins and paid the full debt that we owed. When Jesus died on the cross, he said, "It is finished" (John 19.30).

God's forgiveness is *final*. Paul exclaims in Romans 8.33-34, "Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us" (NLT). As the sovereign Judge of the universe, God has the final word. And if he pronounces us forgiven, then that verdict will surely stand. Satan may rise up to accuse us, but his accusations mean nothing in the court of heaven. This should give us great assurance and hope. One day we will stand before God, but if we are saved we know that our sins are already forgiven and thus eternal life awaits us. What a wonderful gospel!