

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN – FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Colossians 1:13-14

INTRODUCTION

- A. 2 CO 5:17 – “new creature” –
- B. JN 3:3-5.
- C. RO 6:4.
- D. When one becomes a Christian they began a new life. The basic benefit is the gift of God’s forgiveness of sins.

DISCUSSION

I. MAN’S SIN: THE ULTIMATE PROBLEM

- A. Man has largely lost a realization of the reality and consequences of sin.
 - 1. It seems that we have fallen prey to self-sufficiency – RO 1:21 – and/or self-righteousness – LK 18:9-14; RO 10:3.
 - 2. We have banished “sin” from our vocabulary; “forgiveness” has been drained of its meaning and attraction – the Gospel of the Christ can never be “joyous tidings” to a humanistic culture which recognizes no need for salvation.
- B. The Christian has come to know sin’s true character.
 - 1. Sin disrupts the relationship between God and man, resulting in “death,” i.e. alienation, condemnation. GE 2:17; RO 6:23; JA 5:20.
 - 2. No greater crisis or tragedy can be imagined than to be cut off from God in sin – man’s most dire need is to be “saved” – Acts 16:30; cf. MT 8:25.
 - 3. The core of the message of Jesus Christ, the “gospel,” concerns the forgiveness of sins. LK 24:46-47. Acts 2:37-38. Acts 13:38, 32.
 - 4. The message of the Christ is a message by which persons may be saved – 1 TH 2:16; 1 TI 2:4.
- C. Yet, even among Christians, there is a need for renewed emphasis on salvation.
 - 1. Rarely do we speak of our conversion in terms of being saved.
 - 2. Rarely is the candidate for baptism observed mourning for his or her past sins.
 - 3. What is needed is the attitude of David. PS 25:16-18, 6-7; PS 51:9; 79:9.

III. GOD’S NATURE: THE ULTIMATE LOVE

- A. The Christian’s joy is grounded in the knowledge of God’s character and love for man.
 - 1. God’s perfect justice is perfectly balanced with His perfect mercy. RO 11:22. His justice makes His mercy meaningful.
 - 2. God has revealed Himself to be a God of loving-kindness, grace, and compassion. MT 23:37.
 - 3. His character is forgiving – EX 34:6-7; NU 14:18; PS 86:5; 130:1-4.
 - 4. His joy is to save the sinner – LK 15:1-7, 8-10, 11-32.
- B. The joy of forgiveness is intensified knowing the immensity of the sacrifice God’s love led Him to make on our behalf – IS 53:5; JN 3:16-17; 1 JN 4:9-10.
 - 1. 1 PE 1:18-19.
 - 2. EP 2:8; 4:32.
- C. Man can know no greater joy than to understand God is for him, and has in His good pleasure become man’s Savior – it is possible to say, with Mary – LK 1:47.

III. GOD’S FORGIVENESS: THE ULTIMATE GIFT – EP 2:4-9.

- A. The forgiveness of sins is the central theme of the Bible.
 - 1. The anticipation of the Mosaic covenant – JE 31:31-34; 33:8; Cf. MT 26:28.
 - 2. The mission of Jesus, the Messiah – MT 1:21; LK 4:16-21; 19:10; JN 3:17; 4:42; 12:27; Cf. Acts 4:12; 1 TI 1:15.

3. The heart of the Gospel – RO 1:16-17; 1 CO 1:21; EP 1:13; 2 TI 3:15; JA 1:21; 1 PE 1:10-12.
4. The intent of faith, repentance, and baptism – Acts 2:38; 22:16; RO 6:4; 1 PE 3:21.
5. The defining characteristic of the church, the community of the forgiven – Acts 2:41-47; EP 5:23; CO 1:13-14.
6. The focus of the Christian's daily activity – 1 TI 4:16.
- B. On the basis of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, the Christian is able to say that he has "died" to sin – RO 6:3-4. This includes:
 1. Salvation from the guilt of past sins – Acts 2:38; 16:30; 22:16; 2 TI 1:9; TS 3:5; 1 PE 3:21.
 2. Salvation from sin in the present, i.e. power to overcome sin plus cleansing from sins committed after being initially forgiven – 1 JN 1:7-9; 2:1.
 3. Salvation eternally in the future – RO 13:11; HE 9:28; 1 PE 1:5-9; 2 PE 1:10-11.
- C. The greatness of the Christian's joy, peace, gratitude, humility, etc. is in proportion to the depth of his consciousness of sin.
 1. Those who expressed the deepest love for the Lord were those who had the most honest attitude about their own sin – LK 7:36-50; 18:9-14; 19:1-10.
 2. When the Gospel was preached in the book of Acts, the joy of salvation was experienced only after the godly sorrow that accompanied a genuine realization of sin – Acts 2:37-41, 46-47; 8:4-8, 38-39.
- D. The forgiveness of sins is the highest and best of God's gifts to man – RO 6:23.
 1. We need to remember our tears of joy, relief, peace, and wholeness after our baptism into Christ. RE 2:4-5.
 - a. A cleansed conscience is man's deepest need – there is no pillow as soft as a clear conscience.
 - b. In baptism, we appealed to God for, and received, a good conscience – 1 PE 3:21; Cf. HE 9:13-14; 10:1-2, 22. 1) Greek *eperotema* = request, appeal > earnest seeking, intense desire. 2) "Answer. 3) Consider the earnest seeking for a good conscience reflected in Ac. 2:38; 16:30; 22:16.
 - c. The answer to the cry: RO 7:24 – is RO 7:25-8:1. This release from guilt, fear, and alienation is the cherished possession which God could give us only on the basis of the sacrifice of His Son.
 2. We need to continue to count this among our – EP 1:3, 7,
 3. We need to rejoice that our names are written in heaven. LK 10:20; Cf. PH 4:3; R 3:5.
 4. We need to mediate, as did David, on the blessedness of forgiveness – PS 32:1-2, 5. Cf. PS 1:1; MT 5:3.
 5. We need to respond to the gift of forgiveness with:
 - a. Gratitude – 1 TI 1:15-16.
 - b. Devoted service to God – 2 CO 5:14-15; PH 2:12.
 - c. Compassionate forgiveness of others – EP 4:32; CO 3:13.
 - d. Diligence in teaching others the Gospel – Acts 8:4.

CONCLUSION

- A. There are no more valued promises of God than those of His forgiveness. PS 103:11-12. IS 1:18.
- B. The Giver makes the gift more precious, and the gift draws us closer to the Giver – 1 JN 4:18.
- C. Song: "Out of my bondage, sorrow, and night...into Thy freedom, gladness, and light, Jesus, I come to Thee."