

BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT GOD THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

Lesson 18: Jesus Forgives Sins

Biblical doctrine is the study of what the Bible teaches about God and other important truths. This is the eighth of ten lessons about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and our Lord and Savior. We will explore what the Bible teaches about Jesus Christ forgiving sinners.

MAIN TRUTH, CENTRAL SCRIPTURE, AND OUTLINE

Jesus Christ came to earth to forgive sinners. Before the foundation of the world, God the Father determined that His Son, Jesus, would come to earth to save sinners. In the fullness of time, Christ became fully human in order to fulfill the law's righteous requirement that Adam broke when he sinned. Christ's mission was to cover guilty sinners with His righteousness so they can stand spotless before the Father. Because of His role as Redeemer and incarnate God, Christ has both the position and the power necessary to forgive sins. By forgiving sins He restores the sinner's broken relationship with God.

Man's greatest need is to have his sins forgiven because sin disrupts his fellowship with and obedience to his Creator. Because sin is an act of treason against God, forgiveness can only come from God Himself. The Bible teaches that before the foundation of the world, God the Father chose His people to be reconciled to Himself through Christ's work (Eph. 1:3-4). God chose to save His people from their sins (Mt. 1:21) so that they might live holy and blameless lives. Without Christ's work of redemption, none of this would have been possible (Eph. 1:7-8).

1 Timothy 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

1. Jesus determined to forgive sinners (1 Tim. 1:15)

We all know that Christ came into the world to save sinners, but sinners need to be saved from what? Ultimately, Christ saves sinners from their own sin and from God's wrath. Sin is disobedience to God's law in thought, word, or deed. Because God's law is an expression of God Himself, breaking His law means rebellion against God. When Adam sinned against God and broke His law, he brought sin into the world. Ever since then, human hearts are filled with sin and their thoughts, words, and actions are sinful. In order for the relationship between God and humans to be mended, humans must be sinless and they must keep God's law perfectly. That is, of course, impossible. However, Jesus did keep the law perfectly. He also died and shed His blood to answer the curse of the law. Because of Christ's work, He alone is able to forgive sin. He does this by giving or imputing (crediting) His own obedience to His people. They are spiritually united with Christ so they appear perfectly righteous before the Father. They are spiritually clothed in Christ's righteousness and set free from all sin and condemnation (Rom. 8:1), whether past, present, or future.

A. The forgiving intention

Christ's purpose for coming into the world was to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). Christ's salvation of His people from their sins is the driving force of His earthly ministry. All of His life, obedience, suffering, dying, and resurrection accomplished our redemption. Man cannot save himself or remove his own sins (Pr. 20:9). If humans could save themselves, then Christ came and died in vain (Gal. 2:21). In order for sins to be forgiven and sinners to be right with God, there is a price to be paid. From the beginning, the penalty of sin is death (Gen. 2:17). This death is both spiritual and physical. Christ was born as a man under God's moral law (Gal. 4:4) in order to fulfill all righteousness and to pay the penalty of death for His people who broke God's law (Rom. 5:12; 6:23).

B. The eternal intention

The redemption of sinners has always been God's plan. Before the world began, the members of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) made a binding agreement or eternal covenant amongst themselves (Tit. 1:2). In this covenant God would forgive sins in Christ, who in turn would come to earth as the Redeemer of sinners, and the Holy Spirit would awaken sinners to their spiritual condition and need by applying Christ's work of redemption. God's people are those the Father gives to His Son (Jn. 17:6, 9). As the good shepherd, Christ knows His sheep and saves them according to the plan made before the foundation of the world. Christ fulfilled all the work that the Father had planned for Him to do (Jn. 17:4), and satisfied the Father's demands as a substitute for His people. Jesus never turns away a sinner who comes to Him in faith and repentance, forgiving them all. Those who come to Him are a gift from the Father (Jn. 6:37, 44).

2. Jesus has the authority to forgive sinners (Mk. 2:1-12)

A. The mission applied

In Mark 2:1-12, Christ healed a paralyzed man, but He also pronounced that the man's sins were forgiven (Mk. 2:5). The word for forgiveness in the Bible conveys the idea of sending or taking away sins from the sinner. When Jesus forgives sins He removes the guilt of sin and releases the sinner from sin's penalty which is death (Ps. 103:12; Jer. 31:34 Mic. 7:19).

By healing this man, Christ demonstrated his power to forgive sins.

B. The mission accomplished

Christ has the authority to forgive sins because He is God and He is the one who finished the required work. Nothing in the universe can undo God's work of salvation and forgiveness (Rom. 8:38-39). Christ died for our sins and rose again to accomplish eternal redemption and forgiveness for His people. He now requires everyone to repent and believe the gospel to receive forgiveness of sins. This was Christ's message to His disciples on the day of His resurrection:

Luke 24:44-47 ⁴⁴ And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. ⁴⁵ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The apostle Paul preached the message of forgiveness through Christ alone:

Acts 13:38-39 ³⁸ Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: ³⁹ And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

MEMORY VERSES

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

1 John 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.