

# Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer I

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Forgiveness entails an awful lot! It sounds very simple, so we will try and see what God teaches us about it:

- Why we need forgiveness
- Why we need to forgive
- When we are to forgive
- When we are to be ready to forgive
- When there can be no forgiveness

*All of those things are involved in it.*

Matthew 6:11—the model prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread. And **forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors**” (vs 11-12).

When I first read that, I thought: ‘Hooray! Boy I won’t owe any money.’ Well, it doesn’t mean that. It means this: **When you sin you have a debt!** You’ve incurred a debt. You owe something to someone.

Now we’re going to see that there are two sides to the coin *to forgiveness*. Let’s see the parallel account, and it talks, in this case, about sins, rather than just debts. God wanted us to understand: Debts would be more in the way of faults, difficulties, quirks and problems.

Luke 11:4—concerning sin. “And forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us... [who has sinned against us—and then the same thing with Matt. 6]: ...and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.” We will see there is a connection here in forgiveness or lack of forgiveness.

Let’s see that all forgiveness comes from God—see sermon series: *Judge Righteous Judgment*—and God is going to judge every one of us according to our works. In Psa. 130 we have something that helps us understand about forgiveness, **the forgiveness that comes from God!** That ties in with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood and His broken body and everything like that.

Psalms 130:1: “Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O LORD...” We’ll get into that a little bit later: how to pray when you’re in deep trouble.

Here is deep trouble, v 2: “LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?” (vs 2-3)—**because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God!**

This is why God gives the command that we are to forgive because we want forgiveness.

Verse 4: “But *there* is forgiveness with You, that You [God] may be feared.” *You can put there that You may be loved, everything like that goes with it!*

Verse 5: “I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His Word do I hope.” *Forgiveness brings hope, because it cleans the slate; forgiveness brings hope!*

Verse 6: “My soul waits for the LORD more than those who watch for the morning; I say, more than those who watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (vs 5-8). *That also shows God’s overall plan that He’s going to accomplish!*

Now let’s see something else concerning forgiveness. This is where the apostles were hauled before the Sanhedrin for healing the man who had been there begging at the Gate Beautiful; and they couldn’t gainsay what was done. They brought him in there and when he was healed everyone came running to see it—they were greatly amazed (Acts 3:11).

Acts 3:12: “And when Peter saw *it*, he answered to the people. ‘Men, Israelites, why are you wondering at this? And why are you looking upon us so intently as if by *our* own power or godliness *we* have made him to walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus, Whom you delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, after he had judged to release *Him*. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and requested that a man *who was* a murderer be granted to you; and you killed the Author of life Whom God has raised from *the* dead, whereof we are witnesses. And through faith in His name, this *man* whom you see and know was made strong in His name; and the faith that *is* through Him gave this complete soundness [whole] to him in the presence of you all” (vs 12-16).

This was quite a remarkable thing. So, they brought them before the Sanhedrin. And they couldn’t deny it:

Acts 4:8: “Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, If we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what *power* he has

been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, *but* Whom God has raised from *the* dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole” (vs 8-10).

Look at the witness that they gave. There’s going to come a time when we’ll have to give witnesses just like this.

Verse 11: “This is the Stone that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the Head of *the* corner. And there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (vs 11-12). *No other way!*

People today, they don’t like it. They were amazed, didn’t know what to do, but couldn’t denounce it. They went ahead and they commanded them to not preach in this name any longer, and after beating them a little they let them go.

Acts 5—this is after Peter was put in prison. They were going to bring him in, in the morning. So the angel came and let him loose, and the message was:

Acts 5:20: “Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.’ And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught...” (vs 20-21). *All the other apostles came with him, too, after Peter came and showed he was released!*

“...Now, when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying, ‘We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.’.... [they took Peter and John, locked them up and so forth] ...And when they heard these words...” (vs 21-24).

Think about the impression coming upon the high priest, the Sanhedrin, and go carry that clear back to the whole ministry of Christ and bring it forward.

- bring it forward to the crucifixion
- bring it forward to the resurrection
- bring it forward to the receiving the Holy Spirit in the temple on Pentecost
- bring it forward to this time

*Think in your mind:* I wonder what these priests and these elders were thinking when the guards came in

and said, ‘They aren’t there, it was locked. We don’t know what happened to them’?

“...And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to.... [God has a way of timing it] ...But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, ‘Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.’ Then the captain went with the officers *and* brought them without violence, so that they might not be stoned; for they feared the people” (vs 24-26). *So, God turned it around the other way!*

Verse 27: “And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man’s blood upon us” (vs 27-28). *They understood what they had done.*

Now, the reason I’m going through this is because Peter gives them an opportunity to repent. The key thing concerning forgiveness is that ***there must be first repentance!*** God was doing this to bring a witness to them.

Verse 29: “But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, ‘We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus...’” (vs 29-30).

He wanted them to know that it was the God they claim to worship Who had done this. Not by their own power or anything that they had done.

“...Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins... [or forgiveness of sins] ...to Israel” (vs 30-31). *That ties right in with Psa. 130:4.*

***Forgiveness and remission of sins comes through Jesus Christ!*** That’s why He was raised from the dead. That’s why it’s important for us to understand. ***All forgiveness must come through Christ,*** because He bore the sins of the world.

Now let’s see what happened here, v 32: “And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him.”

That’s also important concerning forgiveness. Because if you ask for forgiveness, as we’ll see a little later on, and you don’t obey Him, your forgiveness that you ask is null and void. ***Forgiveness must be followed with the appropriate works!***

Now instead of repenting, v 33: “Now, when they heard *this*, they were cut to *the heart* and took counsel to put them to death.” **Why? Because they were afraid of losing their power!**

Let’s come back to the time of John the Baptist, and let’s see what John told them. This isn’t the first time; they had many, many witnesses to call them to repentance.

Matthew 3:1: “Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea.”

Let’s just rehearse a little bit here concerning John the Baptist: He was the son of a priest, but he never performed a single priestly duty. As a matter of fact, he stayed in the wilderness until the time of ‘His appearing.’ He had a Nazarite vow, which means he didn’t cut his hair, didn’t trim his beard. So, you can figure by the time he came on the scene—which was probably when he was 30-years-old, because that’s when a priest is to start his priestly functions—the Levites can start at 20, but the priests start at 30.

Where did he begin his work? *Not at the temple; down at the River Jordan!* This was the first sign that God gave to them, that God was going to **reject** the temple system. He did it with one who was of the line of Aaron, a priest. I mention that in some of the commentary; it’s very important to understand. They were cleansed from their sins—not by sacrifices at the temple and bathing in the pools that they had around the temple, but by coming to the Jordan.

Verse 2: “And saying, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.’ For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.*’ Now John himself wore a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey” (vs 2-4).

Instead of coming to a priest all decked out in the garments of a priest, all bathed, cleaned, perfumed and incensed, you come to a man standing by the Jordan. I’ve often pictured him as having red hair. Here he is, this great mane of red hair and red beard and he’s standing there preaching repentance, and he’s dressed in this uncouth garments compared to what a priest should wear: white linen and the urim and thummim and the hat and everything like this. So, he’s down there and:

Verse 5: “Then went out to him *those from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan.*”

They understood this was the one who was born of Elizabeth and Zacharias.

Verse 6: “And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.”

Not coming to the priest to offer an offering, and to make a payment to them so they can get forgiveness of sin. They had to send an official committee down there (John 1).

Verse 7: “But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘**You brood of vipers...**’”

It’s important to understand they didn’t repent. ***If there’s no repentance, there is no forgiveness!*** We need to understand that.

“...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, **produce fruits worthy of repentance**” (vs 7-8)—*then there can be forgiveness!* Always remember, ***there must be repentance first!***

Verse 9: “And do not think to say within yourselves, “We have Abraham *for our father*”; for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.” *Then he gave them another lesson that they were in danger of committing the unardonable sin!*

When people hear that they are sinners, lots of times their first reaction is,

Well, I’m not a sinner, I haven’t committed murder; I haven’t committed adultery; I’m not a liar—most of the time.

They don’t realize that by our very nature we are sinners in everything that we do. Even the good that we do is tainted with our nature. That’s why there has to be repentance; then there is forgiveness.

Colossians 1:14: “In Whom we have redemption... [forgiveness] ...through His own blood, **even the remission of sins.**”

Let’s see what happens when we have our sins forgiven:

- How are we to behave?
- How are we to treat other people?

Sometimes we are so loaded down with problems that it takes a long time to overcome. Even though people are trying and they keep making mistakes, that’s the whole purpose with *Judge Righteous Judgment* and go to your brother and so forth.

Matt. 18 is given on the heels of how to handle problems between one another and so forth, this is always the question:

Matthew 18:21: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin

against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?" *I imagine Peter thought he was being pretty generous!*

Verse 22: "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.'"

He comes and he asks forgiveness. How often should I do it? Well, if his repentance toward you is sincere, or the mistake was something that was inadvertent and he asks for forgiveness, you forgive him how ever many times necessary until he's able to change and overcome. That's what it's talking about here. Then Jesus gives a very important parable. Before we go there:

Matthew 6:14: "For **if**..." **The condition is upon us!** It is a choice, an attitude, and sometimes it's hard, sometimes it is difficult, especially in a repetitive situation, over and over again.

"...**if** you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.... [we're going to see that's an important key thing] ...But **if** you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (vs 14-15). **There needs to be repentance!**

Remember, Jesus made payment for all of our sins. When we sin we're indebted to God because we've transgressed His laws, His commandments, and so forth.

Matthew 18:23: "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents" (vs 23-24). *Today that would be in millions of dollars!*

Verse 25: "But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all'" (vs 25-26).

He wasn't trying to ensconce and get away with it. Here's forgiveness above and beyond. And after all, when that's compared to when we understand that our sins crucified Christ, remember what Peter told the Israelites? He said, '**YOU have crucified the Holy One.**' So, this brings that factor into it there.

Verse 27: "And being moved with compassion... [mercy, compassion, forgiveness] ...the lord of that servant released him, **and forgave** him the debt."

This has to do with our attitude when God forgives us. We all want to be forgiven, because that's in the prayer everyday: 'forgive me, O Lord.'

Verse 28: "Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins..." *A pitiful, little amount compared to what he owed!*

Instead of taking him and saying, 'Look, I just had wonderful thing happen to me. I owed 10,000 talents and it was *all* forgiven. Now you only owe me a 100 silver coins. I forgive you.' **No, he didn't do that!**

"...and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying 'Pay me what you owe.' As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything'" (vs 28-29).

I remember a man telling me a story that he loaned this man a good sum of money—several thousand dollars. The man was in the attitude of this servant here who wouldn't listen:

Verse 30: "But he would not *listen*; instead he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed."

This man was telling me he would come into the congregation every Sabbath and there was this man who owed him thousands of dollars; and he would talk to him about it. He said, 'I'll make payment.' But he really never did. So, one day, because his attitude was fomenting: *why doesn't this guy do it. I gave him the money and you know how it is. I gave it to him with good intent. He hasn't paid it back. He said he would but he hasn't.* And it was really getting his attitude down.

After praying about it, he came in one Sabbath and he saw the man and he said. 'You don't owe me anything. If there's anytime in the future you can do anything, I'll consider it, but you don't owe me a thing.' And he said that cleansed his attitude more than anything else. That's important to understand. ***Lack of forgiveness puts you in a wrong, spiritual condition and can lead to bitterness, and can lead to vindictiveness, and lead to hatefulness***—just like this here.

"...he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed... [hypocrisy at its best] ...and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, '*You* wicked servant, **I forgave you all that debt**, because you implored me. **Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?**'" (vs 30-33).

Sometimes forgiving someone really is hard because you've been affronted. You have been hurt.

You've been taken advantage of. Especially in a marital situation when husbands and wives get real picky. Maybe you find something that is a real sin.

- What happens if you come in the house and you inadvertently find that your wife/husband is hooked on online porn, or online gambling?
- What do you do?

*Well, immediately you divorce him and kick him out because there's no forgiveness!*

- Whatever the sin is, is it a sin unto death?

or

- Is a forgivable sin?
- How much better to work with your husband or wife
  - ✓ to repair the situation
  - ✓ to help them
  - ✓ to give forgiveness
  - ✓ to forsake the sin

This is exactly what it's talking about. That's why God wants us to ***forgive and go forward!*** What did Jesus say? *Seventy times seven!* Otherwise, who would stand? You're almost guaranteed this: ***If you don't forgive, you're going to end up with a horrible, terrible and self-righteous attitude that is going to sour your brain!*** Literally pickle your brain in hatred, in self-righteousness, in self-centeredness; not considering that you yourself are a sinner.

Now let's see the lesson involved here, v 34: "And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. **Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart**" (vs 34-35).

That's important to understand. That's profound to realize, and how we need to always exercise that. Let's go another step further. Do not be so easily offended that you cannot help a brother or sister overcome a sin. Even though they may be overbearing, obnoxious or whatever the problem may be—quick of temper, thoughtless—***be forbearing***. We have to be forbearing one another, forgiving one another. God has called us because we're sinners. He hasn't called us because we're righteous. That's important to understand.

Now let's go one step further. Let's see non-repentance, pleading of forgiveness. An apology is a good start. But do apologies necessarily equate repentance? And since just recently we had this latest flap with John Kerry, where he stood up and said, 'I absolutely refuse to repent of any criticism concerning President Bush.' Well, after what he did,

insulting the troops and accusing them of being dumb, unintelligent and everything like that, and you probably saw it all on television, various ones politically got after him and said, 'Don't come and speak for me. Don't come and help me with my campaign.' However, none of them returned any of the money he gave them. There's hypocrisy on both sides. I use this because it's a public thing. After three days he finally issues an apology over a website, which was really not repentance. There's a difference between an apology and repentance. Just like there's a difference in asking forgiveness of sin and having sins forgiven.

(go to the next track)

Exodus 10:16 is after the second plague. There were all the other signs coming up to it, but the second plague of locust. Pharaoh had been beaten down; he was beginning to feel it; this is very instructive:

Exodus 10:16: "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste..."

That's why I brought up about John Kerry; because you know this is only a political expediency and it will last as long as people's remembrance.

"...and he said, 'I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore, I beg you, forgive my sin only this once...'" (vs 16-17). ***Just this once!*** Not all of his sins. Not all of the oppression.

Here is what amounts to an apology without repentance! ***Seeking forgiveness without repentance!***

"...and pray to the LORD your God that He may take away from me this death only.' And he went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts and threw them into the Red Sea. There did not remain one locust in all the boundaries of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart..." (vs 17-20).

Why did He harden Pharaoh's heart? ***Because Pharaoh didn't repent!*** That's a key; that's what to learn here. ***If you don't truly repent, seeking forgiveness is going to lead you to have a hard heart.*** You don't want that! What's a hard heart going to do but make matters worse, *always does!*

"...and he did not let the children of Israel go" (v 20).

Let's look at another false repentance, Acts 8. Here again you have a situation where there is no repentance. Let's look at the attitude that takes place here in the case of Simon Magus; you know what he was. Let's see who he was and what he was, and

then let's see his attitude when it was fully exposed to him what he should do.

Acts 8:9 "But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city... [serving Satan, using witchcraft, sorcery and all the things that are with it] ...and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one."

That's what Satan always does. He let's the men proclaim themselves how great they are—and he is the power behind them.

Verse 10: "To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' Now they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed... [no repentance] ...and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip, and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; who, after coming down *to Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit" (vs 10-15).

Verse 18: "Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on the hands of the apostles, he offered them money." Anyone who commercializes any work or Church of God, pay attention carefully

Verse 19: "Saying, 'Give this authority to me also... [he wanted power; he wanted authority] ...so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit'" (vs 18-19). *Peter rebuked him tremendously!*

Verse 20: "But Peter said to him, 'May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, **for your heart is not right before God**'" (vs 20-21).

Just like Pharaoh's. That's why God hardened Pharaoh's heart, because his heart was not right.

Verse 22: "Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive *that you are in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of unrighteousness.*" (vs 22-23).

Notice how similar that Simon's reaction was to Pharaoh's reaction. He could have repented. Forsaken all! Given up everything! But he didn't.

Verse 24: "But Simon answered *and* said, 'You beseech the Lord on my behalf...'" **No! No one can repent for anybody else!** That's the key.

To this very day, the priests that came from this false Christianity, started by Simon Magus, do the same thing. They have them go to a confessional booth and confess their sins to the priest and then the priest is supposed to pray for them, instead of them repenting to God directly.

So, he says: "... 'You beseech the Lord on my behalf so that none of these things which you have spoken may come upon me'" (v 24).

When he said 'Your heart is not right,' v 23: "...for I perceive *that you are in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of unrighteousness.*" That's just a summary of what was told him; he probably gave him a whole lot more words than that.

Simon didn't repent. What happens when you're confronted with a situation where someone comes to you with a plea for forgiveness and it's really not sincere. What you do is this, you say: 'I'm glad you came to me, but you better go repent to God'; if you can tell it's not really repentance to God. The individual has to come and repent to God then come to you, not come to you and then repent to God. It's important to understand that those things happen that way.

How should your attitude be so that you yourself don't get caught up in self-righteousness, bitterness, vindictiveness, and in judgmental condemnation of someone? Especially their heart, mind and attitude when you cannot know their heart, mind and attitude?—*only God can!* So, we have to take the same attitude that God has here. And this will always have you in a situation where you can forgive when there is real repentance, and that you will not be taken down by harsh and self-righteous thoughts if their repentance is shallow or if there is not repentance. That's important to understand.

Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long" (vs 1-3).

Notice the attitude here. This is real repentance toward God—is it not? *Yes!*

Verse 4: "Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for **You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive**..." (vs 4-5).

*That's the key I want you to understand!*

When there is no repentance or there is shallow repentance or there is a miserable, first-step apology, ***you be ready to forgive, but you wait until there is the repentance necessary.*** Because, as Jesus said: 'If your brother comes to you and repents you forgive him seven times seventy.' But if they come to you and there is not the repentance that you know needs to be, or is very insincere, or is very shallow or it's just kind of 'to make things good for me because I know I'm in trouble' kind of attitude. You're ready to forgive, you give them benefit of doubt, but you also know that it has to go to the next step. You do that so you do not hold in your heart anger, hatred and bitterness toward someone for their faults, even as bad as they may be. ***Be ready to forgive! The Lord is always ready to forgive*** and we'll see how He does that even in severe cases.

"...are good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You" (v 5). *That's what we need to do!*

We're going to look at three severe cases of sin. We're going to see what genuine repentance will do. We also have to understand this. ***If there is no repentance there is no forgiveness, and if they don't repent to God completely—and to you sufficiently—then there is no forgiveness extended by God; you are not required to give forgiveness, BUT you have to be ready forgive*** because maybe somewhere down the road—the 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, twelfth, 14<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> time there will be real repentance.

What happens when people get into a situation where they really fall into something terrible, like David did in the situation with David and Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah the Hittite. Apparently Bathsheba was a Jewish woman married to Uriah the Hittite, one of the chief captains with David, so this really got into a terrible convoluted mess. David was not the only one at fault, because just picture this: here's the king's palace, and right over the edge was Uriah the Hittite's house, and guess where Bathsheba was bathing! *On the rooftop!* She knew the king would be there. Why was she not modest? Why did she not put up some sort of screen? *She wanted to be seen!* She wanted to get next to the power of the king. She had many choices involved herself, didn't she? She could've never exposed herself publicly that way. When the king sent the messenger saying, 'Don't you want to come and visit the king and have a little wine and dinner with him?' She could have said, 'No!' But she didn't.

David being the king and initiating this, his sin was the greater, because he was a man after God's heart, ***and knew better!*** Now let's examine

this thing step-by-step, which will also help us in understanding our sins. This is why we need to pray daily and study daily. Think of all the Psalms and the wonderful praises that God inspired David to bring to Him.

Do you suppose that during this whole incident that David was praying and studying? *No!* He pushed it out of his mind, which really in essence was a tremendous sin against God in itself. When you push God out of your mind and you push against the Holy Spirit, and you continue in your sin, God is going to let you take it to the degree that He desires and He's going drop it upon you. Bathsheba came, she got pregnant, found out she was pregnant—so David schemed. Do you think he was praying, 'Oh God, help me to make this right so I can bring in Uriah the Hittite, so I can kill him'? *Of course not!* So, he schemed. What happens when you're sinning and you don't want to repent?

- you avoid God
- you get busy
- you don't pray
- you don't study

*What happens?*

- your mind gets heavy and depressed
- you get hostile
- you get angry

***Yes, all those things happen!***

So finally, God stepped in. This is why we're told, 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.' How? *Daily!* Because if you don't *daily*, what happens? *You start leaving God and you start entertaining sin;* look where it can lead to.

This was a tremendous sin against God. Remember, David was so pleasing to God with his attitude, because remember, the Ark of the Covenant was taken to David's house, and in David's house he had a special little tabernacle tent made for the Ark of the Covenant. He had the priests—Asaph and Nathan who were there—to administer the things with the Ark. He would come and he would sing praises, he would sing songs and here he even came and he said: 'Lord, I want to build a house for you.' God said, 'All right, David, I'll let a house be built. Not by you—you're a bloody man—but I'm going one step further and I am going to build a house for you to the end of time.'

David pushed God away; he needs to come back to God. This is important for us to understand in dealing with people, especially in a husband and wife situation. If there is a situation where there is a great problem and it's a push-away kind of thing, you really need to pray and ask God to intervene and

deal with the situation. There needs to be forgiveness so there is recovery, and that forgiveness may not come until there is a great explosion and great fight! Where carnal people will say, 'Well, I'm divorcing you, get out of the house.' And yet, you're bound in covenant before God, and it was not a total sin unto death. We need to keep that in mind, that's very, very important!

Now let's see what happened here to David. Nathan came in and he told them about the two men—the rich one/the poor one. The rich man came and he went ahead and instead of taking from his own flock he took from the poor man next to him.

2-Samuel 12:5: "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man... [a little self-righteous indignation to cover for sin] ...And he said to Nathan, 'As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing, and because he had no pity'" (vs 5-6). *Right at that point is exactly where God wanted David to be!*

Notice when Nathan brought the rest of the words, v 7: "And Nathan said to David, '**You are the man.**' Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that *was* too little, I would have given to you such and such *things* besides. **Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD...**'" (vs 7-8).

Think about this: Not only despising the commandment of the Lord to sin, but also think about this in relationship to forgiveness with someone. If you don't forgive, are you despising the commandment of Christ? *Yes, indeed!* That's why in every situation you need to be ready to forgive. And if the person is not really repentant, give the benefit of doubt. Give them some encouragement. Because what'll happen is, if God is dealing with them then God can lead them to understand their sin just like God led David to understand his sin here. Then the repair can begin.

So, He explained it to him, v 9: "Why have **you despised the Word of the LORD** to do evil in his sight? You have stricken Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house..." (vs 9-10).

There are going to be times when there will always be 'a thorn in the flesh' to keep you from repeating the same thing. So, here there was with David.

Verse 10: "'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house...'" (vs 10-11).

You read from here on through to the death of David, and that's exactly what happened.

"...and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun, for you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun'" (vs 11-12).

Now then, David repented, v 13: "And David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Only, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, this child born to you shall surely die'" (vs 13-14).

We can look at what has happened within the Church we know, when there were great evangelists who went out and were profligates and committed adultery and all kind of sexual sins and monetary sins and so forth. Many people knew about those things and many people got bitter and turned off from God and left God and left the Church. Why? *Because they didn't trust God the way that they should have!* If you understand something that is sin, and you have to leave because of sin, then do so. But don't let it become a bitterness and a stumbling block to you, because you may lose salvation because of what someone else did and your reaction to it.

Now, subsequently, the Church that this man was running was destroyed. That's punishment! The other church he started was split in two, and finally the third church that he started was left with a pitiful few and he died. What good does it do to be bitter and angry and hateful because someone has done something of a great magnitude like this? *NONE!*

- We can learn the lesson: ***don't do it!***
- We can learn the lesson: ***anything that is done in secret is going to be uncovered!***

Just like this past week, Ted Haggard, who's supposed to be this great evangelical Christian preacher, got caught soliciting a male prostitute and buying methamphetamine. How he got caught was the man he was soliciting for these things saw him on television and reported it, and said, 'This is the man!' So, even if these things are done secretly, they're going to come out. Rather than be mad, angry and bitter, you know what the sin is; you can



identify what the sin is. If the person doesn't repent, or takes a long time repenting, you still **give the benefit of doubt and be ready to forgive, but you don't have to be associated with it!** That's what's important to understand.

So, you know what happened, the child died, and David bitterly, *bitterly*, **bitterly** repented (Psa. 51).

- Is David going to be in the Kingdom of God? *Yes!*
- Did God forgive him for this? *Yes!*
- Did he have penalties upon him, which remained because of the hard-heartedness and the conniving that David had done to perpetrate this? *Yes!*

*That's why we have to leave these things in God's hands!*

Let's look at another case, 1-Kings 21—here's another wicked man. But what we are looking at here is what happens when there is real repentance. This has to do with Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab took the property of Naboth; had him murdered, took his property. That's the king's imamate domain, without a court ruling. Well, in addition to all the other things that he did, which were evil, God sent His judgment.

1-Kings 21:17: "And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab the king of Israel in Samaria. Behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone to possess it. And you shall speak to him, saying, "Thus says the LORD, 'Have you killed and also taken possession?'" And you shall speak to him saying, "Thus says the LORD, 'In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours'" (vs 17-19).

When Elijah came down, v 20: And Ahab said to Elijah, 'Have you found me, O my enemy?'...."

If sometimes someone brings out a sin to you, you count him as an enemy when you really know they're telling the truth. But what it is, you're not willing to repent, yet, and you want to go against them.

"...And he [Elijah] answered, 'I have found *you* because **you have sold yourself to work evil** in the sight of the LORD.... [this is why repentance is important] ...Behold, I will bring evil upon you and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab him who pisses against the wall, both bond and free in Israel. And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to

anger, and made Israel to sin.' And the LORD also spoke of Jezebel saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. He who dies of Ahab in the city, the dogs shall eat. And he who dies in the field, the birds of the air shall eat.' But there was none like Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel" (vs 20-26). *So, Elijah left!* Knowing full well that these were:

- the words of God
- the conviction of God
- the judgment of God

Here's where free choice comes in: You never know what the person is really going to do in the final analysis. Notice what Ahab did. The last one you would ever expect to repent. Especially when Elijah came and Ahab said, 'Oh, my enemy!'

Verse 27: "Then it came to pass when Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and walked softly."

I don't know how far that Elijah went, before God recognized that. But here's the key: ***As long as there is life there is hope! And as long as there is repentance, there is hope!*** That's why God is patient and long-suffering. That's why Jesus said, 'Forgive seventy times seven.' We need to be patient and long-suffering, too. So here, after this condemnation, what do you think that he did? ***He repented!*** In repentance can you change God's judgment and God's attitude? *Yes!*

Notice what God told Elijah to do, v 28: "And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Do you see how Ahab humbles himself before Me? Because he humbles himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days. *But* in his son's days I will bring the evil upon his house'" (vs 28-29).

That's why when we read: 'The wages of sin is death,' we all have the death penalty on us because of sin. When we repent, God reverses it totally. Another lesson to learn here, which is this: If you think that God won't forgive you because it's a sin that, a plague of a sin that keeps repeating itself over and over again because of weakness of flesh or anger or whatever it may be, ***God hasn't given up on you, yet!*** So we should not give up on others, yet. That's why we are to be ready to forgive. Look what happened.

***Forgive that you may be forgiven***, which is a tremendous key in our relationship with God and each other.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:11-12
- 2) Luke 11:4
- 3) Psalm 130:1-8
- 4) Acts 3:12-16
- 5) Acts 4:8-12
- 6) Acts 5:20-33
- 7) Matthew 3:1-9
- 8) Colossians 1:14
- 9) Matthew 18:21-22
- 10) Matthew 6:14-15
- 11) Matthew 18:23-34
- 12) Exodus 10:16-20
- 13) Acts 8:9-15, 18-24, 23
- 14) Psalm 86:1-5
- 15) 2-Samuel 12:5-14
- 16) 1-Kings 21:17-29

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 3:11
- John 1
- Psalm 51

Also referenced: Sermon/Booklet:  
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