

Your love and forgiveness make the difference

Dear Father,

Though my sins are many, You have forgiven them all.

And You forgive me every time. You do not stop, You are faithful even though I'm not. When I fail, You don't fail me. You have never failed me. You have always sought to bring me back to You. Even when I'd come to You and prevaricate. That I said: "Forgive me", and knew I was going to disobey You not long after that. Times I did not confess my sins but sought to silence and ease my conscience. I have done such things and spat You in the face, abused Your goodness deliberately. Stubbornly ignoring You, doing my will despite all warnings. Worsening it by pretending. Wearing my holy mask, praying my pious prayers, speaking hollow words, making foolish statements.

Though my sins were many, You have forgiven them all.

And in these years You have changed me in multiple ways. I've grown in wisdom and my insight is deeper. Rest: I feel I'm more peaceful and safe for others. I can't really name everything but I've become more like You Jesus. Facing the reality of my imperfection I can say that You are becoming more real in me. I am beginning to live like You Jesus, more and more. I will not deny the truth. It's Your work in me that I cannot deny, I will not deny. You have changed me and will continue to do so.

And here's the thing that baffles me. It is the essence of grace: I have not deserved it in any way. I have no right to salvation, life, anything based on myself. You don't owe me anything. It's not that You need to save me, it's that You want (choose) to save me. You don't owe me anything, I have no rights whatsoever. It's because You grant me, because You freely give the gift of salvation that I live. But even my very breath is not mine. You have given me that breath, You have the right to take it away. And that goes for everything I have. All I have and am is Yours. You are sovereign. You have given me freedom and authority. Nevertheless, that still leaves You sovereign. I am not trying to be too Calvinistic here, I am speaking my mind. You understand what I mean when I say that I have no rights. Apart from You I do not have anything going for me. So that is why I have everything in Christ and nothing outside of Him. Nothing. It's not a religious, hollow, pious statement. Nothing, I have nothing that has not been given to me.

This is my conclusion: it's Your love, You choose to love. You choose to reach out, You choose to save, You choose to keep on calling for repentance. And it's for man to take responsibility and repent and trust in You or not. Again I say, it's because of You only. But repenting, turning away from the old to the new, acknowledging sin and breaking with it is something You will not do for a human. Still, You did not choose anyone for their goodness, You chose us for our sinfulness. That is how You are glorified. Through our (my) sinfulness and brokenness reversed by Your redemptive, restoring work.

All I have and am is Yours.

Just like You Jesus, I want to reach out. You hung out with the bad folks. You did not care for status. You care for people and their miserable state without You. You are concerned with people's needs, You know their needs. Help me to reach out more. I want to do it. No fear, no perfectionism, no overconfidence. Just obedience and courage. "For the love of Christ urges us". Indeed, let that be true.

Written on June 24, 2007

Scriptural references (next page) added on July 9, 2008

Scriptural references in OT-NT order (NKJV)

Job 32:8 *"But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding."*

Job 33:4 *"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."*

Psalms 32:1-5 *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin."*

Psalms 103:10-21 *"He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them. The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!"*

Psalms 130:3-4 *"If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared."*

Proverbs 1:7 *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."*

Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

Matthew 9:10-13 *"Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

Matthew 28:19-20 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

John 15:5 *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."*

John 15:16 *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."*

Romans 9:14-16 *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy."*

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 *"For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."*

Philippians 1:6 *"being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."*

1 John 1:8-9 *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*