

# Our Pardoning God

Isa 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it. Isa 55:6-11

## Introduction:

1. The scene is a courtroom trial in South Africa. A frail black woman stands slowly to her feet. She is over seventy years old. Facing her from across the room are several white security police officers. One of them, Mr. van der Broek, has just been tried and found guilty in the murders of first the woman's son and then her husband. He had come to the woman's home, taken her son, shot him at point-blank and then burned the young man's body while he and his officers partied nearby. Several years later Mr. van der Broek and his cohorts returned to take away her husband as well. For months she heard nothing of his whereabouts. Then, almost two years after her husband's disappearance, Mr. van der Broek came back to fetch her. How vividly she remembered that night. She was taken to a river bank where she was shown her husband, bound and beaten but still strong in spirit, lying on a pile of

wood. The last words she heard from his lips as Mr. van der Broek and his fellow officers poured gasoline over his body and set him aflame were, "Father, forgive them. . ."

Now the woman stands in the courtroom and listens to the confessions of Mr. van der Broek. A member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission turns to her and asks, "So what do you want? How should justice be done to this man who has so brutally destroyed your family?" "I want three things," Begins the old woman calmly, but confidently. "I want first to be taken to the place where my husband's body was burned so that I can gather up the dust and give his remains a decent burial."

She pauses, then continues. "My husband and son were my only family. I want, secondly, therefore, for Mr. van der Broek to become my son. I would like for him to come twice a month to the ghetto and spend a day with me so that I can pour out on him whatever love I still have remaining in me." "And finally," she says, "I would like Mr. van der Broek to know that I offer him my forgiveness because Jesus Christ died to forgive. This was also the wish of my husband. And so, I would kindly ask someone to come to my side and lead me across the courtroom so that I can take Mr. van der Broek in my arms, embrace him and let him know that he is truly forgiven."

As the court assistants come to lead the elderly woman across the room, Mr. van der Broek faints, overwhelmed by what he has just heard. And as he struggles for consciousness, those in the courtroom, family, friends, neighbors - all victims of decades of oppression and injustice - begin to sing, softly but assuredly, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." - copied

2. What a picture of forgiveness.
3. But I can show you a greater picture of forgiveness

- a. One a hill outside of Jerusalem Jesus died on a cross
  - b. He had suffered though He had done no wrong
  - c. Trust Him as Savior and receive the pardon of God
4. My purpose today, by the Lord's help, is to exalt the pardoning and forgiveness of God

## **I. GOD'S PARDON HAS A GREAT COST**

Ps 25:11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

### **A. Earthly Pardons are Cheap**

1. Presidential Pardons are Cheap
  - a) *Our president has the authority to pardon those who have broken federal laws*
  - b) *President Bill Clinton pardoned 459 people during his time as president*
    - (1) Probably most notorious were the 16 members of FALN the Puerto Rican terror group that set off 120 bombs in the US mostly in New York City and Chicago.
    - (2) The paper work was filed. A staffer read all the requests and made recommendations to the president who signed the papers.
  - c) *President George W. Bush pardoned 200 people.*
  - d) *So far President Obama has pardoned 61 people.*
  - e) *The presidential pardon is cheap.*
2. Governor Pardons are Cheap
  - a) *Governors of states have the power to pardon offenses against the state*
  - b) *Again, it is paperwork. It does not cost much.*

### **B. God's Pardon Comes at Great Cost**

1. Think of God's infinite holiness and perfect justice and remember what God had to do to pardon lost sinners
2. In order for God to forgive sinners an infinitely great price had to be paid for our salvation
3. God had to sacrifice His only begotten Son to pay the price for our pardon
4. God loved is demonstrated by the fact that He gave His Son - Jn 3:16  
*16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*
5. Your salvation was free to you because Another paid the price. It cost the heavenly Father His Son
  - a) *He who from eternity had dwelt with the Father must be surrendered and He must leave heaven and come to earth.*
  - b) *See Him bowed in Gethsemane praying to the heavenly Father. The agony is so great that capillaries burst and He appears to be sweating drops of blood.*
  - c) *See Him tied to that pillar and watch that terrible scourge as it falls again and again on his quivering flesh.*
  - d) *Blood runs down his back at the scourge pulls away flesh revealing muscles and internal organs - your pardon cost that.*
  - e) *Follow Him as He begins that weary walk to Calvary carrying the heavy cross.*
  - f) *Look up as He hangs on the cross. He can barely breath. He struggles to raise Himself so that he can catch a breath. With each breath his scourged back rubs against the rough cross. Look at Him and say to yourself - "My pardon caused that"*
6. God's justice had to be satisfied. The law had to be honored and the holiness of God had to be magnified.

7. Oh the greatness of God's pardoning love
  - a) *Man had revolted against Him*
  - b) *Man had murdered His servants many of whom were burned at the stake*
  - c) *Many derided and laughed to scorn God's Word*
  - d) *And man crucified God's Son*
  - e) *And yet, to them, God says.....*

*Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD:  
though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;  
though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*
8. No sinner has ever yet been lost because his sins were too great for God to pardon.
  - a) *Find the vilest sinner that breathes God's air*
  - b) *Bring me the most depraved, wretched sinner out there*
  - c) *I would say to that sinner 'There is mercy sufficient for you, and God's pardoning love is greater than your iniquity!'*

God's Pardon Has a Great Cost....

## II. GOD PARDONS WILLINGLY?

Neh 9:17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

- Nehemiah was recounting the history of the children of Israel especially their wilderness wanderings.
- Not only is God incomparable in the forgiveness he has — but also in the way he forgives

### A. Human Pardons

1. Human pardons are often spoiled in the way that they are given
2. Maybe you know what it is like to be forgiven in such a way that you felt more miserable *after* the pardon than before it
3. Often *man's* pardon is only the result of long pleading.
4. There is an ugly kind of forgiveness that is sometimes seen
  - a) *It beats the offender over and over with the offense*
  - b) *It constantly reminds the offender that he has been forgiven*
  - c) *It is proud of its forgiving and lets everyone know*

## **B. Our Lord's Pardon**

1. Jesus was invited to the house of Simon the Pharisee
  - a) *When a woman comes timidly to the door.*
  - b) *She was a sinner - a disgraceful woman of the town.*
  - c) *Most of the people at the dinner avoided her because of her past*
  - d) *Perhaps she noticed a look of deep compassion on his face when she saw him in the streets, and that look broke her heart.*
  - e) *She remembered her past and she was repentant and hoped for mercy and big tears began to fall*
  - f) *Her tears wet those blessed feet and she wiped Jesus' feet with her hair*
  - g) *The host at the head of the table looked on with scorn.*
    - (1) He knew about that woman
    - (2) He said within himself, 'If Jesus were a prophet, he would know who and what kind of woman this was who touched him.'
    - (3) Jesus perceived his thoughts, rebuked him, and then turning to the weeping sinner, says, 'Your sins are forgiven; go in peace.'
    - (4) O the exquisite tenderness of our Lord in giving that guilty soul its pardon.
2. One day the scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus *a woman taken in*

*adultery.*

- a) *They demand that she should be stoned to death according to the law of Moses and asked his approval of the sentence.*
- b) *Jesus stooped to write on the ground, then he looked up and said 'He who is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her.'*
- c) *Convicted in their own consciences, they leave one by one, until only the woman remains.*
- d) *Jesus said to that guilty woman, 'Has no one condemned you?' And she said, 'No one, Lord.' 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.'*

God Pardons Willingly....

### **III. GOD PARDONS FREQUENTLY**

*Mt 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

#### **A. Man's Pardons Soon Run Out**

1. Peter approached the Lord and asked how many times he should forgive someone - till seven times?
  - a) *Seven times seemed to him a great many — but how few and small they looked after the Savior's answer.*
  - b) *'I say not unto you until seven times; but until seventy times seven.'*
  - c) *How much greater was the divine idea of pardon than the human. Peter and Christ both consulted their own hearts — but how different the response.*
2. But he who tells us to forgive our brother *seventy times seven*, forgives us millions of times

#### **B. God's Pardons Never Run Out**

1. Never is there a minute when our God is not forgiving us.
2. His pardoning love runs parallel with our erring life.
3. John Newton said, “I am downright staggered at the exceeding riches of his grace. How Christ can go on pardoning day after day, hour after hour!!! Sometimes I feel almost afraid to ask for a fresh pardon for very shame!”
4. What believer has not felt the same?
5. The very multitude of God's pardons overwhelms us
6. It would tire out any angel to write down all the pardons that God bestows on one of his children.
7. Ah, dear Christian, rejoice in the thought that you are always pardoned.

1Jo 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

- a) *How precious is that present tense — 'cleanses' — keeps on cleansing, never ceasing in its purifying work.*
- b) *Being reconciled unto God, the friendship is ever maintained — sins are forgiven as soon as they are committed — wrongs are pardoned every moment — guilt is purged by the precious blood every moment.*

God Pardon's Frequently....

#### **IV. GOD PARDONS COMPLETELY**

Jer 33:8 And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

##### **A. Man's Forgiveness Often is Not Complete**

1. Sometimes man's forgiveness is not really true pardon at all.

2. The hurt person says that all is forgiven and forgotten but let some fresh little difference arise and the old wrongs that have been buried for years rise from their graves
3. It never was real forgiveness and pardon
4. That kind of forgiveness is like a fire that is supposed to be put out
5. But really it was smoldering for years, and a new wrong stirred the slumbering embers and made the old flames break out again.

## **B. God's Pardon is Complete**

1. When God pardons, it is complete
2. God never brings old scores up again
3. When he says 'forgiven', we are forgiven, and the sins he buries in the grave of pardoning love never live or are seen again.
4. Notice the different terms in Scripture that set forth *the forgiveness of our God?*
  - a) *Our sins are declared to be 'covered' - Something that is covered still exists under the cover*
  - b) *Our sins are said to be 'washed' away - When a stain has been removed and washed away, it is not just hidden or covered, it is gone*
  - c) *Not only are our sins said to be covered and washed away but we are also told that they are purged - Washing and purging imply thorough work.*
  - d) *Our sins are blotted out*
  - e) *Our sins are also declared to be 'removed', and that to an infinite distance*

Ps 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

- (1) Who shall say where the east commences or where the west terminates?
  - (2) The distance is boundless.
  - (3) Yet as far as the furthest east is from the remotest west — so far has pardoning love taken our sins from us.
- f) *Our sins are said to be cast into the depths of the sea*
- Mic 7:19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.
- (1) Notice the number of sins that God takes away, '*ALL* their sins.' Not one is left to tell the tale.
  - (2) Notice where all the sins are cast: '*In the depths of the sea.*'
  - (3) Not in any *river* lest like Kishon it should run dry and reveal the hidden crime.
  - (4) Not in the foam of the waves that break along the beach, lest when the tide went down they should be left high dry upon the shore.
  - (5) But '*in the depths*'; far out to sea, where the waters cover the face of the deep.
  - (6) There God drops his people's sins! They are out of sight — eternally hidden — not only forgiven but forgotten — wondrous love!

## Conclusion:

1. Oh, believer, rejoice!
  - a. The *past* is forgiven — the *present* is being forgiven — the *future* will be forgiven.
  - b. You are *surrounded by pardons*, and they line the road to Heaven's gate.
2. Lost sinner, there is hope for you?

- a. You may say, 'But there is no sinner as bad as I am!'
- b. That may be true but there is no God like our pardoning God.
- c. Let an *incomparable sinner* and an *incomparable Savior* meet today
- d. You shall find his pardons are even greater and more numerous than your crimes.

3. Governor Neff of Texas once spoke to the assembled convicts of penitentiaries of that state. He finished by saying that he would remain to listen if any man wanted to speak with him. When the meeting was over, a large group of men remained, many of them lifers. One by one they each told the governor that he was there through a frame-up, an injustice, or a judicial blunder. Each asked to be freed. Finally, one man came up and said, "Governor, I just want to say that I'm guilty. I committed the crime, but I believe I've paid for it. If I were freed, I would do everything I could to be a good citizen and prove myself worthy of your mercy." The governor pardoned this man. Why? Because he admitted his guilt. He was repentant. So it is with us if we are to be redeemed from the awful sentence we're under. But there is a difference. We can't say that we've paid for any of it because as the hymn says, "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; sin has left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow." If we will plead His blood, God will redeem us.
4. Pardon is offered to every sinner, but the pardon must be accepted. George Wilson was sentenced to hang after he was convicted of killing a guard while robbing a federal payroll from a train in the early 1800s. Public sentiment against capital punishment led to an eventual pardon by President Andrew Jackson. Unbelievably, Wilson refused to accept the pardon. Can one do that? The case became so legally confusing that the Supreme Court had to rule on it. Chief Justice John Marshall delivered the court's opinion: "A pardon is a paper whose only value must be determined by the receiver of the pardon. It has no value apart from that

which the receiver gives it. George Wilson has refused to accept the pardon. We cannot conceive why he would do so, but he has. Therefore, George Wilson must die.” Consequently Wilson was hanged. God’s grace becomes a pardon from sin only to those who accept it. – Leadership, Summer 1991, pg 49